



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
BUREAU OF MEDICINE AND SURGERY  
2300 E STREET NW  
WASHINGTON DC 20372-5300

Canc frp: Oct 2000

IN REPLY REFER TO

BUMEDNOTE 6550

BUMED-OONC  
11 Jan 2000

BUMED NOTICE 6550

From: Chief, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery  
To: Ships and Stations Having Medical Department Personnel  
Subj: GUIDELINES FOR EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS AND SUBSPECIALTY  
CODE ASSIGNMENT FOR ADVANCED PRACTICE NURSES (APNs)  
Ref: (a) American Academy of Nurse Practitioners, Scope of  
Practice for Nurse Practitioners, 1993  
(b) BUMEDINST 6550.7  
(c) NAVMEDCOMINST 6550.2  
(d) BUMEDINST 6550.10  
(e) American Association of College of Nursing, 1996  
(f) SECNAVINST 6401.2A  
(g) BUMEDINST 1214.1  
(h) Health Affairs Policy Memoranda 96-047 and 97-026  
(i) BUMEDINST 6320.66B

1. Purpose. To clarify the educational requirements and subspecialty code assignment for APNs in the Navy health care delivery system for both active duty and Reserve Nurse Corps officers.

2. Background

a. Reference (a) describes APNs as registered nurses who provide primary health care and specialized health services to individuals, families, groups, and communities. For the purpose of this notice, APNs are defined as credentialed health care providers granted privileges within the scope of their practice. The three advanced practice specialties recognized by Navy Medicine are nurse anesthetist, nurse midwife, and nurse practitioner with a focus on family practice, pediatrics, or women's health. Each type of APN is designated by a subspecialty code reflecting their specialty, education, and certification. Because of their scope of practice, it is important the education prepares the APN to assume broad responsibilities in the military health care system.

b. Although references (b) through (d) indicate APNs must have successfully completed an approved educational program, the educational requirements are not clearly outlined. Currently, many forces contribute to the need to clarify the educational requirements for APNs. The most compelling forces include:

- (1) The proliferation of different types of programs.
- (2) The growing concern regarding nurse practitioner program quality.
- (3) Increased scrutiny from state regulatory agencies concerning educational preparation.
- (4) The delineation of essential components of master's education for advanced practice nurses outlined in reference (e).
- (5) Legislative action and health affairs policy granting board certification pay to active duty APNs.

### 3. Policy

a. The education requirements for APNs will be a degree from an accredited nurse anesthesia, nurse midwife, or nurse practitioner master's program. The nurse practitioner specialties include family practice, pediatrics, or women's health. The initial practitioner certification and recertification, as prescribed by the specialty professional organization or the American Nurses Credentialing Center is required and the APN must possess a current license to practice professional nursing per reference (f). The graduate nurse practitioner is required to have the practitioner specialty certification within 12 months following successful completion of an APN master's program.

b. Although duty under instruction is the preferred route for attaining an APN degree, Nurse Corps officers who decide to pursue an APN graduate degree on their own should submit a copy of their proposed curriculum to the cognizant specialty leader for review and recommendations before enrolling in the program. When applying for an APN subspecialty code, the officer should submit the following to the career plans officer:

- (1) Copy of transcripts.
- (2) Proof of national certification.
- (3) Recommendation from the cognizant specialty leader.
- (4) Command endorsement regarding current utilization as an APN and suitability for independent practice.

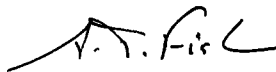
c. Assignment to a subspecialty coded billet (reference (g)) is not guaranteed since APN assignments are based on requirements and available billets.

d. Nurses who graduated from an approved practitioner certificate program or received a graduate degree in a nursing specialty other than APN and completed an APN postgraduate certificate before 1 January 1996 and currently possess an APN subspecialty code with the "K" suffix will maintain their subspecialty code. Nurse Corps officers who have received an APN postmaster's certificate or graduated from a nonmaster's practitioner program since January 1996 are not eligible for assignment of a subspecialty code.

e. Per reference (h), only APNs who have a graduate degree and board certification in the same specialty are eligible for board certification pay. Submit requests for board certification pay to the Medical Department Special Pays Branch (MED-527), Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, 2300 E Street, NW, Washington, DC 20372-5300. APNs must submit a copy of their recertification letter to continue receiving board certification pay.

f. The standard for educational requirements for APNs will continue to be monitored by the Director, Navy Nurse Corps (MED-OONC) to ensure APNs are prepared to meet the core competencies for their role in Navy Medicine. Commanding officers are responsible for ensuring the proper credentialing and privileging of APNs following reference (i). This policy supersedes any earlier correspondence distributed regarding APN graduate education or assignment of subspecialty codes.

4. Cancellation Contingency. May be retained until incorporated into reference (i).

  
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Available at:  
<http://navymedicine.med.navy.mil/instructions/external/external.htm>